

World. It was in the year 1663, that Europeans heard of the Ohio river, and the first intimation of its existence came from the Indians to Dollier, a



STATUE OF LA SALLE
LINCOLN PARK, CHICAGO.

French missionary in Canada. It was reported to be almost as large as the St. Lawrence. This information inspired the adventurous spirit of La Salle with a desire to behold the great river. Accordingly, with Indian guides, he began his journey by way of Onondaga, New York. In October, 1669, he reached the Allegheny river which

he descended to its junction with the Monongahela, and thence continued down the Ohio as far as the falls—now Louisville, Kentucky. There his guides deserted him and he was compelled to make his way back to Canada alone. The first white men who reached the Falls of the great Kanawha, were Thomas Batts, Robert Fallam, and Thomas Woods, who, with Jack Neasam, left the Appomattox Indian town on the Appomattox river, in Virginia, September 1, 1671, and fifteen days later arrived at the Falls.

2. Expedition of Governor Spottswood over the Blue Ridge.—Alexander Spottswood was one of the most distinguished individuals that controlled the destiny of Colonial Virginia. Hardy pioneers had extended civilization over the eastern part of the

Colony, but of the region to the westward, nothing was known; the time was now come when white men should penetrate the vast wilderness and return to tell the story of its wonderful resources. Governor



ALEX. SPOTTSWOOD.*



LADY SPOTTSWOOD.

Spottswood equipped a party of thirty horsemen, and, heading it in person, left Williamsburg, then the capital of Virginia, on June 20th, 1716.

*Alexander Spottswood, who led the party, was born in 1676, at Tangier, then an English Colony, in Africa, his father being the resident surgeon. He was a thoroughly trained soldier, serving on the Continent under the Duke of Marlborough. He was dangerously wounded at the battle of Blenheim, in 1704, when serving as quartermaster-general, with the rank of Colonel. He arrived in Virginia in 1710, as Lieutenant-Governor under George Hamilton, the Earl of Orkney, and his administration was the most able of all the Colonial rulers. He, in connection with Robert Cary of England, established the first iron furnace in North America. In 1736, he was made Deputy Postmaster-General for the American Colonies, and it was he who promoted Benjamin Franklin to the position of Postmaster for the province of Pennsylvania. He rose to the rank of Major-General and,

4. The Party on the Summit of the Blue Ridge.

—Pressing onward through King William and Middlesex counties, they reached the Blue Ridge, which they passed by way of Swift Run Gap. Crossing the Shenandoah river, the intrepid governor and his party pushed onward across the Shenandoah Valley and up the mountains until, on September 5th, 1716, on one of the loftiest peaks of the Appalachian range, probably within the present limits of Rockingham county, Old Virginia, they halted and drank a health to King George. What a spot! never before had the voice of civilized man been heard amid this mountain fastness. Here Robert Brooke, one of the party and the king's surveyor-general, conducted the first scientific observation ever made upon the Appalachian mountains.

5. The Knights of the Golden Horseshoe.—The party returned to Williamsburg and gave the most glowing description of the country which they had visited, and for the purpose of inducing emigration to this far western land, Governor Spotswood established the Trans-Montaine Order, or Knights of the Golden Horseshoe, giving to each of those who had accom-

plished on the eve of embarking with troops destined for Carthage, died at Annapolis, Maryland, June 7th, 1740. He owned the house in which Lord Cornwallis afterward signed the articles of capitulation at Yorktown.

Lady Spotswood, who became the wife of Governor Alexander Spotswood, in 1721, was Anne Butler, daughter of Richard Butler, of Westminster, England. She derived her middle name from James Butler, Duke of Ormond, her god-father. There are many descendants of the issue of this marriage in Virginia and West Virginia.

panied him a miniature horseshoe; some of these were set with valuable stones, and all bore the inscription, *Sic jurat transcendere montes*—Thus he swears to cross the mountains. These were given to all who would accept them with the understanding that they would comply with the terms implied in the inscription.

6. Shenandoah the Home of Savage Men.—The valley region includes all the territory lying between the Blue Ridge on the east and the Alleghany mountains on the west. The first quarter of the eighteenth century passed away and savage men roamed back and forth through all its wide extent, and quarreled and warred among themselves for the possession of the hunting grounds, then a howling wilderness. But the time was near at hand when those who were to settle the land, were to occupy it. The Shenandoah Valley was to be redeemed from the sway of barbarous men and made the dwelling-place of civilization.

7. No Definite Western Boundaries of Virginia's Border Counties.—Virginia was the first state in the world composed of separate political divisions based upon the principle of representative self-government. In 1634, twenty-seven years after the founding of Jamestown, the colony was divided into eight counties or shires, similar to those of England. Virginia ever tried to keep civil government abreast of her most adventurous pioneers, and to accomplish this, the House of Burgesses—the legislative body of the Colony—continued to make provision for the formation of new counties. These were usually established

with defined boundaries except on the west, where the county extended indefinitely into the wilderness, so that the settlement on the utmost bounds of civilization would be included.

8. Exploration of John Van Matre.—About the year 1725, John Van Matre, a representative of an old Dutch family of New York, traversed the valley of the South Branch of the Potomac. He was an Indian trader making his headquarters with the Delawares, a part of which tribe then resided on the Susquehanna river in Pennsylvania, whence he journeyed far toward the south to trade with the Cherokees and Catawbias. Returning to New York, he advised his sons, if they ever removed to Virginia, to secure lands on the South Branch, these being, as he said, the best he had seen.

9. Morgan Morgan, the First White Man to Find a Home in West Virginia.—John Lederer came as an explorer; Governor Spotswood and party came as adventurers; John Van Matre came as an Indian trader, but his sons, whom he advised regarding the fertile lands of the South Branch, were not to be the first to establish a home within the State. Morgan Morgan was the name of him who reared the first cabin home in West Virginia. The year was 1726-7, and the place was the vicinity of the present village of Bunker Hill, on Mill Creek, in Mill Creek magisterial district, in what is now Berkeley county. Morgan Morgan was a native of Wales, from whence he emigrated in early life to Pennsylvania. He was a member of the Church of England and noted for his exemplary piety. With the

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soberness of a sound mind and the earnestness of a pious heart, he went about doing good, but forgot not his own household. Late in life he became a minister of the church, and was a power for good in that wilderness land. Such was the character of the man who established the first Christian home in West Virginia.

10. The Founding of Mecklenberg, now Shepherdstown.—One mile below the present town of Shepherdstown is what has been known for nearly two hundred years as the "Old Pack-horse Ford," which was the only crossing of the Potomac river east or west of it. By way of this ford came the Germans from Pennsylvania, who found here the gateway to the fertile lands south of the Potomac. Hither came a number of them as early as 1727-8, and once across the river they saw on all sides the grey limestone, reminding them of similar scenes in the Fatherland, and here they halted. They built a little village which they called New Mecklenberg, from the city of that name in Germany. Thus was founded the oldest town in West Virginia. Thirty-four years later the Virginia House of Burgesses legally established the town and afterward changed the name to that of Shepherdstown, in honor of Thomas Shepherd, who laid it out.

11. The Van Matre Patent.—It has been stated that John Van Matre, the Indian trader, advised his sons to secure lands on the Virginia frontier. One of them, Isaac Van Matre, visited that region about the year 1727, and so pleased was he that, in 1730, he and his

brother John, received from Governor Gooch a patent for 40,000 acres of land which they located and surveyed the same year. Much of it was in what are now Jefferson and Berkeley counties.

12. Joist Hite's Colony.—In 1731, the Van Matres sold a part of these lands to Joist Hite, who, in the year 1732, with his family and three of his sons-in-law, George Bowman, Jacob Chrisman and Paul Froman, and other persons to the number of sixteen families, left York, Pennsylvania, and cutting their way through the wilderness, crossed the Potomac at the "Old Pack-horse Ford," and thence proceeding up the Valley, found homes in the vicinity of Winchester. These settlements were made in what is now Frederick county, Virginia, and, therefore, not within the present borders of this State, but we make mention of them, for they exerted a great influence upon the early settlements within the present boundaries of Berkeley and Jefferson counties.

13. Other Early West Virginia Pioneers.—In 1730, and the years immediately following, a number of daring frontiersmen found homes in West Virginia. They settled principally upon the Opequon, Back creek, Tuscarora creek, Little and Great Cacapon, along the Potomac and in the South Branch Valley. Some were Scotch-Irish and Germans, but these were not the only people who found early homes in West Virginia; for in its occupation and settlement, there were blended almost all of the elements of European civilization which were transplanted to our country. For awhile these distinct elements maintained their

individuality, but a long series of Indian wars, together with the Revolution, forced them into a united whole, and so complete was the assimilation that instead of a later divergence they have by common interests become more firmly bound together.

"Our forest life was rough and rude,
And dangers closed us round;
But here amid the green old wood,
Freedom was sought and found."

—Gallagher.

CHAPTER V.

IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE STATE.

From 1730 to 1754.

1. Establishment of Local Government in West Virginia.—The Virginians have always been a liberty-loving and a law-abiding people, and as they advanced westward into the wilderness they endeavored to have civil government extended over them. At the time of the settlement of Morgan Morgan, and the coming of the German mechanics to Shepherdstown, the country occupied by them was within the limits of Spottsylvania county the western limit of which was undefined. In 1734, Orange county was formed from Spottsylvania and the inhabited part of West Virginia was included in it until 1738, when the House of Burgesses created Frederick county, the northern half of which was about the same as that of the present counties of Berkeley, Morgan and Jefferson. But five years passed away and it was 1743 before there was sufficient population to justify the organization of Frederick county, and it was not until that year that Governor Gooch named the justices of the Peace for the new county. Morgan Morgan was the first one named and thus the first settler in West Virginia became the first civil officer within the limits of the State.